

REMARKS:Claims 4-6

Applicant acknowledges and appreciates allowance of claims 4-6.

Claims 9-16

Nonelected claims 9-16 have been canceled.

Claims 1-3, 7, 8

Claims 1-3, 7, and 8 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Lin et al. (US6175475).

Applicant respectfully disagrees that claims 1 and 3 are anticipated by Lin. The rejection relies on Lin's showing of a spacer layer (415), pinned layer (420), and antiferromagnetic layer (430) to show a biasing tab. As shown in Lin's FIG. 4, the spacer layer (415), pinned layer (420), and antiferromagnetic layer (430) together form a unitary structure that is coextensive with the free layer (410).

In sharp contrast, claims 1 and 3 each require multiple bias tabs (510), an example of which are shown in FIG. 5 of the present application. As shown, the bias tabs are individually definable structures, as opposed to Lin's singular structure. This distinction between claim 1 and Lin was discussed with the Examiner in a telephonic interview granted October 14, 2005 to the undersigned Applicant's representative. The Examiner agreed that two tabs would overcome Lin.

In the interview, arguments regarding broadest reasonable interpretation in light of the specification and plain meaning were also discussed regarding defining the two structures in the claims. The Examiner agreed to consider these arguments, presented in full below.

As required by MPEP Section 2111, the Examiner must give the claims their broadest reasonable interpretation in light of the specification. First, the claims themselves require multiple tabs. As described throughout the specification, e.g., with

reference to FIGS. 5 and 6, the tabs are described in plural, denoting two individually defined structures. See also p. 9, lines 5-9, which describes a pair of tabs (206) which stabilize the free layer. Referring to FIGS. 2, 5 and 6, the tabs are clearly shown as individually defined structures. In sharp contrast, Lin does not show individually defined structures having the claimed series of layers. Therefore, it would not be reasonable to equate Lin's unitary structure with the individually defined bias tabs of the claimed invention, in light of the specification.

Second, the present specification also describes a structure having layers coextensive with the free layer. See p. 21, line 19 to p. 23, line 5 and FIG. 7 of the present application. Note the following quote from p. 21, lines 19-23:

Another embodiment is shown in Fig. 7. The sensor shown in Fig. 7 differs from the sensors shown in the prior Figures in that the physical width 720 of the layers approximately defines the magnetic trackwidth of the sensor. (emphasis added)

This quote clearly indicates that a sensor having biasing layers coextensive with the free layer (track width) is different than one having multiple bias tabs. Accordingly, it would not be reasonable to equate Lin's unitary structure with the individually defined bias tabs of the claimed invention, in light of the present specification.

Thus, giving the claims their broadest reasonable interpretation in light of the specification, claims 1 and 3 each require multiple, individually defined bias tabs. Because Lin fails to teach or even suggest multiple bias tabs, claims 1 and 3 are novel over Lin.

Accordingly, claims 1 and 3 are believed to be allowable over Lin and the remaining art of record. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1 and 3 is respectfully requested.

The terms of a claim must also be given their plain meaning unless defined in the specification. In other words, they must be read as they would be interpreted by those of ordinary skill in the art. The Examiner, being one skilled in the art, will

appreciate that the word "tabs" (plural) in the structural sense (as claimed) is used in the field of magnetic recording to define structures positioned towards opposite ends of a layer or layers (e.g., free layer). An example of use of the word "tabs" in the art, presented as evidence of its meaning to those skilled in the art, is "lead overlay tabs." As is well known, lead overlay tabs overlay ends of the sensor stack. They are not coextensive with the sensor stack; if they were, they would short and the sensor would be inoperative.

In the instant case, one skilled in the art reading the claims would interpret the plural term "bias tabs" as referring to individually discernable structures, as opposed to a singular structure as recited in Lin.

Accordingly, claims 1 and 3 are believed to be allowable over Lin and the remaining art of record. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1 and 3 is respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 7 and 8 depend from claim 1, and therefore incorporate the limitations of claim 1. By virtue of their dependence, claims 2, 7 and 8 are also believed to be allowable. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1, 2, 7 and 8 is respectfully requested.

Because the claims have not been amended, and the multiple tabs limitation was argued in the prior action, it is believed that no further search or consideration is required. Allowance of all pending claims is respectfully requested.


In the event a telephone conversation would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner may reach the undersigned at (408) 971-2573. For payment of any additional fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, the Commissioner is authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account No. 09-0466 (Order No. SJO9-2000-0124US2).

Respectfully submitted,

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